

# Spark Gap

Volume 22, Issue 10, October 2005



*The Official  
Newsletter of the  
Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club*



Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club  
P. O. Box 836  
Franklin, IN 46131  
[www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org)

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club held it's annual combined meeting and picnic on Saturday, September 17, 2005.

Elections of officers were held as part of the day's festivities. This was the first year for a September picnic as the club had earlier voted to move the picnic up one month due to the extreme cold spell for the 2004 picnic.

September certainly gave us a better day to gather at Union Christian Church on East County Road and 300 South in Franklin, Indiana. Over 20 members brought in a wide variety of food so that we could do an eat and meet type of meeting. Jerry Schantz, W9JJS, took charge of the grill while Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH, made sure no one left without a pile of documents. For those of you who missed the picnic, you missed out on lots of great conversation and a lot of delicious food.

Election of officers occurred as part of the meeting. All of the nominees ran unopposed. Elected to serve for the next year were for President, Scott Coombs, KC9EKR; Vice President, Dave Daily, KB9LOT, Secretary, Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH, and for Treasurer, Brenda Halder, KC9EBL. They will

## MARC Elects Officers at Annual Picnic/Meeting

assume all duties of their respective offices at the October meeting.

Handed out at the meeting were three of the many news stories regarding ham radio operations for the Katrina hurricane response. The Wall Street Journal ran an article on September 6, 2005 on how ham radios were filling the communications vacuum left as virtually all high-end emergency communications failed as a result of the hurricane.

The New York Times ran an article on

September 8th regarding how emergency responders were turning to ham radio as all other forms of communication failed to operate. The third article came from a Baltimore newspaper on September 16th on how ham radio was connecting families together who had gotten

separated during evacuation of the hurricane damaged areas.

It is great to see an emphasis on the good that amateur radio provides. One article brought to light one failing that should be addressed. It seems that most of the hams working were so concerned with providing communications that they neglected to get photos or videos of their operations to be able to show others exactly how they were operating and under what conditions.

*Note: If you missed getting copies of the three articles mentioned above, just drop a note to the secretary@midstatehams.org with your address and a copy will be mailed to you.*

## New Officers Elected

# Amateur Radio Hurricane Recovery Operations Winding Down

NEWINGTON, CT, Oct 11, 2005—Amateur Radio operations to support relief and recover operations in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita continue to wind down as conventional telecommunication systems return to working order. Over the weekend, ARRL Alabama Section Manager Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, shut down his American Red Cross Amateur Radio volunteer intake operation in Montgomery. Sarratt had overseen that function for about five weeks.

“Today, on the 37th day of Amateur Radio operations at the Montgomery, Alabama, American Red Cross center, the amateur radios were powered down for a final time,” Sarratt said October 9. “It was a strange feeling packing, saying goodbye then walking out of the old Super Kmart building knowing I would not return tomorrow.”

The Montgomery center is still operational for other Red Cross relief and recovery efforts, but the ham radio volunteer activity shut down because the organization’s various mass-care services again have access to conventional telecommunication systems. In addition to checking through volunteers, Amateur Radio station W4AP at the Montgomery staging facility monitored day and night to keep in touch with HF-equipped mobile operators traveling to or at their assigned locations.

After Sarratt and his volunteer staff spent their duty tour registering and orienting hundreds of Amateur Radio volunteers for deployment to hard-hit Gulf Coast communities, Sarratt spent a couple of days last week visiting some of the American Red Cross shelters those volunteers went on to serve in Mississippi.

“My tour included Yankee stadium in Biloxi, Hancock EOC [emergency operations center] at Stennis Airport, the future Hancock EOC

and Harrison County EOC in Gulfport,” Sarratt said. “Part of the tour was a visit to the hardest-hit areas in each county. Currently, I do not have the words to describe the devastation.”

One visit was with Mississippi District Emergency Coordinator Tom Hammack, W4WLF—volunteering at the Harrison County EOC. Sarratt reports that during his stopover, Mississippi National Guard Lt Col Richard P. Martin presented Hammack with a certificate of appreciation for his service. “Lt Col Martin also presented a certificate of appreciation to the ARRL for sending Amateur Radio operators and supplies to aid Mississippi,” he added. “The certificate reads, ‘For outstanding service and devotion to duty during Hurricane Katrina disaster relief operations.’”

Hammack has been living in the EOC since the Hurricane Katrina flooded and badly damaged his house. In his off time, he’s been attempting to work his way through the damage and debris. Sarratt said he enjoyed meeting the volunteers in the field and that his time at the Montgomery ARC marshaling center was gratifying. “It has been a pleasure working with all the American Red Cross personnel during this relief operation,” he said.

“My job was made much easier by all the excellent help and support shown to me by the ARC Response Technology Team staff.” Sarratt said the hams he worked with at the Montgomery center were “fine, quality men and women” and included dedicated amateurs from all over the US as well as many local operators. “We developed many processes, practices and procedures that will make doing this next time much easier,” he said. Sarratt praised all of the volunteers, some of whom traveled significant distances to help the Red Cross and other relief organizations and agencies, including The Salvation Army, faith-based groups, emergency management agencies and EOCs. “A few amateurs signed up to be redeployed when we put out the call,



Mississippi National Guard Lt Col Richard Martin (left) presents a certificate of appreciation to Mississippi ARES DEC Tom Hammack, W4WLF, at the Harrison County, Mississippi, EOC. [Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, Photo]

## Officers

**President:**  
Scott Coombs,  
KC9EKR

**Vice President:**  
Dave Daily,  
KB9LOT

**Secretary:**  
Linda  
Harshbarger,  
KC9GCH

**Treasurer:**  
Brenda Haler,  
KC9EBL

**Repeater Trustee:**  
Matt Payne,  
KB9UJE

**Spark Gap Editor:**  
Bob LaGrange,  
N9SIU

## *Katrina Response*

# Greenwood Band Day Update

Once again the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club provided communications and services to the Greenwood High School Marching Band Competition. This public service event lasted 9 hours with over 4500 people in attendance. This year 14 amateurs donated their time to provide public safety activities. Communications were handled on 146.550 MHz simplex; over 300 messages communicated. MARC has been asked to participate for the last eight years and is a great opportunity for the club to hone its public safety services.

Thanks to KB9HSE, KC9CFK, KB9UJE, KC9EBL, N9QVO, AA9YP, KC9XFR, WD9GMM, WB9AYB, KB9SKI, AA9YG, KB9LOT, W8ISH, and N9SIU for volunteering their time.

## Hurricane Operations Wind down...

*(continued from previous page)*

and many more inquired and sincerely wanted to redeploy," he said.

"This effort was a success and a huge help to the people and workers in the devastated region," Sarratt concluded. "Many non-amateurs now know what works when all else fails."

Red Cross Volunteer Services staffer Ginger Flynn, who worked with Amateur Radio volunteers in Mississippi, reflected Sarratt's sentiments from the agency's point of view. Flynn said that in mid-September, the Red Cross was struggling with erratic cell phones and Internet connections for communication. "We had six shelters, a feeding kitchen, an operations center and two staff shelters. Until the hams came in and set up, we were unable to have any consistent or reliable communication," she recounted. All locations required daily visits and consumed scarce fuel supplies. As a result, shelters and kitchens couldn't always meet their needs, she said.

"The hams solved all these problems, and we were able to communicate needs, and meet emergency incidents immediately," she said. "These men and women take their personal time and fund themselves to make this contribution to the American Red Cross and the American people."



## Possible Site for MARC Repeater Link

Matt Payne, KB9UJE, traveled up to Indianapolis recently and took these photos (and some other great shots) of a possible location for a link for the 146.835 repeater. The site is on top of the Methodist Medical Tower and part of Clarian's Emergency Response Plan for alternate communications during times of significant disasters. Currently there is a link to a Lawrence repeater to provide communications between Clarian hospitals, St. Vincent's and St. Francis hospitals. A link with the 146.835 will provide better communications between Clarian and southside hospitals such as Johnson Memorial Hospital and Community South. Matt has ordered new crystals for the Master II radio which will be used for the link receiver. Matt will be leading the effort to get the equipment modified and prepared for deployment. All work efforts are to be coordinated with Matt as installation will need to be made under the direction of Bill Cherry and Linda Harshbarger of Clarian Health. Bill, KC9IAA, has approval of all things on the roof at the Medical Tower and Linda, KC9GCH, coordinates the Clarian Emergency Response Plan.

**WA9RDF  
Repeater  
146.835/  
146.235 MHz  
151.4 Hz PL  
Tone**

**Weekly Net  
Every Sunday  
at 7PM EST**

***Tune in to hear  
the ARRL  
Newsline!***



## Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newslines are often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to [netcontrol@midstatehams.org](mailto:netcontrol@midstatehams.org), and we will record your check-in!



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# 2005 Schedule of Events

## Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

### OCTOBER

#### 15 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

#### 15 **Indianapolis Marathon**

Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, or visit [IndyHams.org](http://IndyHams.org) for more information

### NOVEMBER

#### 8 **Red Cross Disaster Radio Group Meeting**

Red Cross Chapter, Indianapolis, IN

#### 19 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

#### 19-20 **Fort Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo**

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum and Exposition Center, Fort Wayne, IN  
*The Indianapolis Radio Club is offering a bus trip to the Hamfest for \$20 - admission price to the Hamfest not included. See their website [www.indyradioclub.org](http://www.indyradioclub.org) for more information.*

#### 26 **Evansville Hamfest**

Vanderburgh Co. 4-H Fairgrounds, Evansville, IN

### DECEMBER

#### 13 **Red Cross Disaster Radio Group Meeting**

Red Cross Chapter, Indianapolis, IN

#### 17 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

Note: For most Indianapolis events, contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, to volunteer or for more information check out website [www.indyhams.org](http://www.indyhams.org).

## Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131  
See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.